

Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

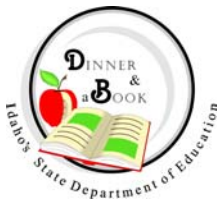
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READY TO LEARN

Spring books link to science

With the arrival of spring, book connections provide wonderful opportunities to combine reading and science related activities

"Pie in the Sky," by Lois Ehlert, 2004, Harcourt. Ehlert has a knack for bringing everyday wonders and concepts into an understandable form for young children. Her amazing collages in this book take readers from the tree to a yummy cherry pie.



"And the Good Brown Earth," by Kathy Henderson, 2003/2004, Candlewick Press. From planting to harvest season, Joe and his Grandma establish a special relationship with the earth. A perfect book to combine with spring planting.

"Whose Garden Is It?," by Mary Ann Hoberman and illustrated by Jane Dyer, 2004, Harcourt. A great book to discuss the symbiotic relationship between plants, water, sun, earth, insects, and humans. The poetic voice of Hoberman and gorgeous illustrations carry another type of symbiotic relationship.

"Rockheads," by Harriet Ziefert and illustrated by Todd McKie, 2004, Houghton Mifflin. Looking for a cool rock project that combines learning to count with art? Add a little imagination and you have a guaranteed solution with this book.

Dr. Stan Steiner teaches Children's Literature at Boise State University.

Find more book reviews at <http://education.boisestate.edu/ssteine>.

Best practices guides available

Dear Reader:

What do blocks, sand and water, and art supplies have in common? They are things kids love to play with and they also are featured in a best practices for preschool guide produced by the State Department of Education.

The guide is called "Learning through the Eyes of a Child: A Guide to Best Teaching Practices in Early Education" and is available on the department's website at: www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd/docs/content/LearningThruTheEyesofaChild.pdf.

The document was developed by our special education department for providers of early childhood education.

It's based on popular document created by North Carolina's De-



Dr. Marilyn Howard
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partment of Education.

The guide aims at helping providers and parents recognize that the normal play

activities of preschoolers help teach early literacy, math, science, social studies, and the arts.

With the recent national focus on academics and testing for preschool children, it is important to remember the value of play. It's been said that the "job" of young children is to play. Play is important because that's how young children learn.

We as adults play an important role to ensure that this play time is enriching and meaningful for children.

The guide highlight how these activities connect and support the preschool learning standards developed for Idaho.

Marilyn Howard

READY TO LEARN

Activities help children reach for stars

It's amazing how much young children know about space travel already. Parents and caregivers can capitalize on that interest through this activity.

What you need:

- * A large cardboard box
- * Heavy paper to make helmets, or use bicycle helmets
- * Accessory items that the children choose, such as a wagon to haul parts, fuel, food, walkie-talkies, etc.

What to do:

Space play is both a reality and a fantasy for young children today.

You can build language, turn taking, and lots of other skills just building on play started by your children. Here are some examples of how to help.

"What a fine spaceship you have built. What is it named?"



fly?" (Write the name of the destination on a large circle and place it across the room). "What will you need to bring?" (Food, clothes, etc.) "Cars need gas to go, what do you think a spaceship needs?"

Ask lots of questions to stimulate creative thoughts.

For example, if the children are going to the moon, ask, "What will it be like on the moon? Will there be anyone living there?"

After the children get in the spaceship and "take off," let them make up their story.

You might write the story down

(Print the name on both sides). "Who will fly the ship/be the ship doctor/etc.?"

"Where are you going to

as you hear it, and then make a little book that the children can illustrate after their "trip."

Add songs, finger plays and games.

Here's a song: "Ring around the rocket ship, try to grab a star! Stardust, stardust, fall where you are!" Do this to "Ring around the rosy..."

You can do the same thing for all kinds of trips: plane, boat, car, and train with lots of fun making new props.

Below are some space books to try:

"Big Silver Space," by Ken Wilson-Max;

"Aliens for Breakfast," by Jonathan Etra, Stephanie Spinner, and Steve Bjorkman.



RESOURCES

Water offers fun, learning opportunities

From the National Association of Education of Young Children

Most children love to play with water and this type of play also provides learning opportunities.

Family and care givers should always consider safety factors when children are anywhere near water.

Following are some ideas for safe, fun and educational water play:

Mathematical concepts can be learned using a variety of inexpensive materials. Assorted containers and funnels can help children develop concepts such as empty/full, before/after, shallow/deep, and heavy/light.

Individual water tubs at a table are great for enhancing fine motor skills.

For younger children, eye-hand coordination can be practiced by retrieving objects with tongs, aquarium nets, scoops, and fingers.

Small muscles get a workout as plastic tubes are fitted to funnels and sponges are wrung dry. Very young children may also get many happy moments repetitively filling and emptying containers.

Children can learn about measurement by using measuring cups or discovering the best way to squirt long and short distances using squeeze bottles or plant misters filled with water.

A child's vocabulary is enriched as she uses words such as funnel, surface, float, and strain.

Adults can promote language acquisition by adding foam or rubber alphabet letters or numbers to a container filled with water to be fished out with nets. Name the letters or numbers they catch, spell out their names, or see who can catch the highest or lowest number.

Make cleaning up part of the learning experience using rags and short-handled mops to do "grown-up" work.

NUTRITION

Young gardeners may eat what they plant

From Nibbles for Health U.S. Department of Agriculture

Gardening offers family fun. In a garden, you can be active, relax, and spend time together. Growing vegetables or herbs teaches children that plants need food and water to grow and stay healthy. Caring for plants helps develop responsibility. It also builds self-esteem when kids see what they can grow. A



garden can teach your child about new foods. Kids usually taste what they grow.

What you need:

Containers for city gardens: milk and juice carton, empty cans, empty bleach bottle, plastic bucket, fish bowl

Garden plot: a 2-foot plot is big enough

Child-size tools: watering can, hose, small shovel, old spoon and fork, small rake, digging stick, hoe and spade, sticks to label plants

Seeds or seedlings

Water

Soil for container gardens

Fertilizer

What would your child like to grow? Most kids are proud of what they grow. Even when gardening is messy, your child is learning. He or she can help with almost any gardening task. It's okay if the garden isn't planted perfectly.

Pick the vegetables or herbs to plant.

Find a sunny place.

Make the soil ready in a container or in the garden.

Plant seeds or small plants in the soil

Water plants when they are thirsty.

READY TO LEARN

Try singing about the different shapes

Learning to identify shapes is important to learning geometry later in life. Below is a simple song from daycare.about.com to help preschoolers learn about shapes.



How Can You Tell (tune "Frere Jacques")

This is a square, this is a square, How can you tell? How can you tell?

It has four sides, All the same size.

It's a Square, It's a Square.

This is a circle, this is a circle.

How can you tell? How can you tell?

It goes round and round, No end can be found.

It's a circle, It's a circle.

This is a triangle, this is a triangle.

How can you tell? How can you tell?

It only has three sides,

That join to make three points.

It's a Triangle, It's a triangle.

This is a Rectangle, This is a rectangle.

How can you tell? How can you tell?

It has two short sides

And it has two long sides.

It's a rectangle, Its a rectangle.

INFORMATION

Kids need lots of sleep; help them get their zzzzzs

A national poll and studies released this spring indicated that the nation's youngest children may not be getting enough sleep and that a lack of adequate sleep may contribute to problems later in their lives.

How much sleep do children need? The National Sleep Foundation – www.sleepfoundation.org – has detailed information on sleep habits and recommended for parents.

Below are the foundation's tips for different age groups of children:

Newborns

Observe baby's sleep patterns and identify signs of

sleepiness.

Put baby in the crib when drowsy, not asleep.

Place baby to sleep on his/her back with face and head clear of blankets and other soft items.

Encourage nighttime sleep.

Infants (3-11 month)

Develop regular daytime and bedtime schedules.

Create a consistent and enjoyable bedtime routine.

Establish a regular "sleep friendly" environment.

Encourage baby to fall asleep independently and to become a "self-soother."

Toddlers (1-3 years)

Maintain a daily sleep schedule and consistent bedtime routine.

Make the bedroom environment the same every night and throughout the night.

Set limits that are consistent, communicated and enforced.

Encourage use of a security object such as a blanket or stuffed animal.

Preschoolers (3-5 years)

Maintain a regular and consistent sleep schedule.

Have a relaxing bedtime routine that ends in the room where the child sleeps.

Child should sleep in the same sleeping environment every night, in a room that is cool, quiet and dark – and without a TV.

Avoid caffeine.